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ABSTRACT

This booklet contains criteria and guidelines designed primarily for those who are involved in funding, planning, or implementing staff training and development in relation to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) in England. It was produced in consultation with a working group composed of representatives from the Department of Education and Science, the Training Agency of the Department of Employment, the Further Education Unit (FEU), and the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ). The booklet describes criteria for staff development programs, including targeting, integration of general staff development, timing, and objectives. Guidelines on implementation and funding are provided, along with a call to put the plan into action. Appendixes list sources of funding for staff development, the NCVQ/FEU information and guidance network, and sources of further information. (KC)

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NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

INITIAL CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

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NATIONAL VOCATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS

INITIAL CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO FURTHER AND HIGHER EDUCATION

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FOREWORD

National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) are being introduced in colleges, training institutions and industry. Although the effects have been small so far, as the NVQ framework builds up it will bring significant changes, not only to assessment and examination practices but also to the provision of education and training itself.

The introduction of NVQs cannot be seen in isolation: it is part of a trend of the 1980s, and in some sectors long before. Nevertheless, the pace of change will now accelerate and will affect all industrial sectors and vocational departments in colleges. NVQs, with their clearly defined criteria, make explicit the direction in which vocational education and training is to change. Furthermore, the establishment of the NVQ framework is part of the Government's programme and has the support of all the national agencies responsible for vocational education and training (VET).

NVQs emphasise that competence is essentially concerned with performance in employment. This implies that more assessment and learning will take place in the workplace and more attention will need to be given to the requirements of work in the projects, assignments and workshop activities within learning programmes.

NVQs require that access to qualifications is open to anyone able to demonstrate competence. This is facilitated by NVQs being independent of any specific course, programme or mode of learning. They thus open the way to learning through experience, in the workplace or outside, and to open learning, in addition to formal programmes. NVQs also promote access through the elimination of barriers such as age limits and minimum time requirements in training and experience. Equal opportunities are positively promoted.

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NVQs will normally be in the form of units which can be separately assessed and credited. This will allow credits to be accumulated over varying periods, in different locations and through different modes of learning. Credit accumulation will provide a further means of facilitating access and encouraging higher participation rates in VET. It will also encourage continuing learning – unit-based systems are particularly suitable for adults. NCVQ has introduced the National Record of Vocational Achievement through which a national system of credit accumulation and transfer will operate.

The growth of unit-based credit systems clearly implies the need for the development of modular training programmes. Modular provision, together with an increase in the number of adult learners entering or returning to VET, will create a demand for more flexible provision of learning programmes. Many trainees will wish to build on previous credits or achievements not yet credited and only pursue certain units of a qualification to obtain a full NVQ. Others will wish to take isolated units or groups of units to meet their immediate employment needs. Many will require part-time or evening tuition. Open learning will certainly grow and will become a common part of training programmes. Structured workplace learning will increasingly become a requirement along with assessments in the workplace.

All this points towards the need for comprehensive counselling and guidance services and individually tailored programmes of learning. It is recognised that such provision places considerable demands on colleges and other institutions and such flexibility will be only partially realised.

The guidance which follows is an initial attempt to address the question of staff development of VET providers, particularly for college tutors and managers.

Geoff Stanton
Chief Officer, FEU

Peter Thompson
Chief Executive, NCVQ

INTRODUCTION

These criteria and guidelines are primarily for those who are involved in funding, planning or implementing staff training and development in relation to National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs). They have been produced in consultation with a Working Group composed of representatives from the Department of Education and Science (DES), the Training Agency of the Department of Employment, the Further Education Unit (FEU) and the National Council for Vocational Qualifications (NCVQ).

The NCVQ has a concern to ensure that high-quality competence-based vocational qualifications are provided, and it is recognised that this depends to a substantial extent on appropriate training and development for the staff involved. This concern was noted by the Review of Vocational Qualifications*. However, it has neither the remit nor the resources to provide national staff development programmes itself. Thus NCVQ's role is to provide advice and information on staff development and training in relation to NVQs, both in further and higher education and in industry, to those who are responsible for implementing staff development programmes.

* See *Review of Vocational Qualifications Final Report* (HMSO, April 1986) paragraph 6.22.

TARGETING

A wide range of people who have responsibility for vocational education and training in colleges, industry and local authorities will be affected in many different ways by the introduction of NVQs. It will not be sufficient to provide development programmes for teaching staff alone. Delivering NVQs also has significant implications for those responsible for the management and organisation of VET.

The target groups are thus:

- those responsible for (VET) policies;
- senior college managers and industrial training managers;
- middle managers in colleges and industrial training supervisors, including those responsible for the development and management of assessment for NVQs;
- tutors, trainers and support staff;
- counsellors and careers advisers.

The needs of these groups will vary. All will require information in order to be generally aware of the NVQ model and its implications. Additionally, training for the first three groups may need to focus on specific aspects of making provision, and, for the other groups, on aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. Some staff development programmes will also need to focus on particular vocational areas (e.g. engineering, catering, business operations) for staff working in them. Programmes therefore need to be carefully targeted to meet the needs of the different groups.

INTEGRATION AND CHARACTER OF GENERAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMES

The introduction of NVQs will have fundamental implications for all aspects of provision, including counselling and modes of learning and assessment. We believe, therefore, that staff development for NVQs will have maximum impact if it is integrated with staff development of a more general nature. For example, when issues of curriculum development are being addressed, the function of the NVQ statement of competence should be taken into account. At the same time, it must be recognised that introducing NVQs imposes additional staff development requirements and will normally require additional funding in order to be carried out successfully. Integration will ensure coherence in the development of individuals together with the best use of resources.

Since staff development is essentially a continuous process, it requires reinforcement and opportunities to progress to higher levels of competence and understanding. Programmes should therefore provide opportunities for progression and further development. In general, one-day awareness-raising events should form part of a more comprehensive programme leading to competence. Each development activity, whether it be a course, seminar, working group, quality circle or distance learning, should be part of a continuous programme. The 'cascade' approach sometimes adopted by LEAs and colleges may be a useful basis for such programmes. Further information on planning and organising staff development may be found in the FEU document *Planning Staff Development: A Guide for Managers* (1988).

TIMING

Many initiatives to introduce competence-based training are already under way in industry and colleges and are providing valuable experience upon which to build.

The introduction of NVQs is accelerating the pace of these activities and providing a national framework in which to take it forward. The Government has set the target that the NVQ framework should be in place across all vocational areas by 1991.

The NCVQ has introduced conditional accreditation as a means of encouraging development of the new system of qualifications. Conditional accreditation is given to a qualification when it is recognised by the lead or professional body as being based on best current practice, and there is agreement with the awarding body to develop it further to meet full NVQ criteria over a specified period. The introduction of NVQs will thus often occur as a two-stage process, with a conditional qualification, partially meeting the requirements, followed by the full NVQ meeting the requirements described in this document. This reflects the various stages of development towards NVQs in different sectors and different industry, professional and awarding bodies. This means that NVQs, in areas where competence standards have already been developed, may be significantly different in their delivery and assessment. Other conditional NVQs in areas where competence standards have yet to be fully developed may initially be little different from present awards. But such awards will change within the next two years when the full competence standards are available. The introduction of NVQs will thus be uneven.

The NCVQ has established a timetable for introducing NVQs in specified occupational areas. Those responsible for staff development may wish to consult this timetable during their planning process for information on when particular vocational departments are likely to be affected and when consequent developments are needed.

OBJECTIVES

Many of the changes implicit in the introduction of NVQs are related to the key features of these new awards. These features may be summarised as:

- a 'statement of competence' in the form of units which contain elements of competence and associated performance criteria;
- assessment based upon the performance specified in the statement of competence;
- independence of the qualification from the mode and duration of programmes of learning and training;
- open access to assessment and certification;
- assessment and recording of separate units of competence;
- credit accumulation and transfer based on units of competence, facilitated by the National Record of Vocational Achievement.

These features translate into the following priorities for education and training organisations:

- provision of flexible opportunities to develop competence as specified in NVQs, often in association with employers;
- development of methods to assess competence – particularly assessment of performance at work and of prior achievement – and to enable accumulation of units;
- provision of guidance and counselling services to determine the needs of trainees;
- development of administrative, management and organisational systems to support changing needs;
- information and marketing strategies to promote increased participation in vocational learning and training for NVQs;
- establishment of new partnerships with employers to co-ordinate the delivery of NVQs, and to provide flexible learning and assessment to individuals in college and at work.

GUIDELINES ON IMPLEMENTATION AND FUNDING

The present context for organising and delivering staff development is both complex and subject to change. The following paragraphs set out strategic considerations, together with possible sources of funding. Further information will be provided when available, as the programme of staff development grows.

Successful implementation of staff development on a national scale will depend on the creation of effective partnerships between the various organisations responsible for staff development. It may be appropriate for providers to 'assemble' funds and other support from a number of different sources. Care should be taken at the local level to ensure adequate co-ordination during the planning and implementation stages.

A range of potential providers and networks already exists at national, regional and local levels. There is a strong case for awareness raising and needs identification to be undertaken at the national and regional levels. Most needs could, in theory, be catered for at national, regional or local levels, but considerations of cost-effectiveness and quality would suggest that college and LEA managers and those responsible for staff training are best catered for at the regional level.

Staff training and development for the introduction of NVQs should not be seen as a new or extra form of provision to be grafted on to what exists. It should rather be integrated in organic and fundamental ways within general staff development provision. For this reason, existing staff development structures should be utilised. The creation of special teams and arrangements in isolation are not likely to be effective; what is needed is reorientation of existing staff development activities. Both the NCVQ and FEU are seeking to secure additional funds to supplement existing sources (see Appendix A). Further information will be provided as it becomes available.

Staff may wish to know what opportunities exist for them to gain formal recognition of their professional competence within the new arrangements. A Lead Industry Body (LIB) for training is being established. This will provide the basis for a structure of new awards for trainers based on the achievement of agreed units of competence specifically related to the new model of VET provision.

Funding for staff development falls into two main categories: that which is used to establish a support infrastructure, and that which may be used to enable individual participation. The NCVQ, as an initial pump-priming exercise, has established, through FEU, an embryonic infrastructure to provide information and guidance to further education (see Appendix B). This initiative is designed to stimulate the establishment of more extensive and permanent arrangements. The Training Agency of the Department of Employment is introducing staff development to support the introduction of NVQs and units of competence through Accredited Training Centres, mainly in relation to its own programmes – Employment Training and the Youth Training Scheme. There are also various local initiatives to introduce modular provision, competency-based courses, accreditation of prior learning and workplace assessment, which can all be seen as part of the new model of VET and the introduction of NVQs. These are just the start of a growing programme.

It should also be noted that a wide range of publications, videos and training materials are already available on NVQs and more are being prepared. These can be obtained from NCVQ, FEU or, more appropriately in respect of local initiatives, the regional network officers (see Appendix B) who can also provide general guidance and support on staff development issues.

ACTION

This initial document has been produced for all interested bodies to assist their planning and implementation of staff development for the introduction of NVQs. It is suggested that such bodies contact the regional staff officers (see Appendix B) to discuss their plans at the earliest opportunity.

APPENDIX A: SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR STAFF DEVELOPMENT

The main sources of funding which include, but are not confined to, the provision of staff development are:

For FHE institutions only:

- the LEA Training Grants Scheme (LEATGS);
- LEA and institution funds allocated to staff development;
- the Mutual Development Fund (MDF).

For FHE institutions and employers involved in training programmes, and Training Agency field staff:

- 'Training the Trainers' funds channelled through Training Agency Accredited Training Centres (ATCs);
- funds specifically allocated for implementing new Training Agency programmes.

For employers only:

- employers' training funds;
- funds associated with specific Training Agency or Department of Trade and Industry initiatives, e.g. in management training, enterprise.

It should be noted that, in all cases, these funds cover many activities in education and industry. Each has its own criteria, and its use must be discussed with the providing body.

APPENDIX B: NCVQ/FEU INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE NETWORK

To help initiate an infrastructure, the NCVQ has funded one full-time equivalent post based centrally at FEU, and two full-time equivalent posts based regionally, for one year in the first instance. People in these posts will work within the following staged programme.

STAGE 1: AWARENESS, INFORMATION, GENERAL COMPETENCE

(September 1988 - March 1989)

This stage will involve continuing awareness raising and the development of competence in:

- assessment, and recording achievement;
- providing a range of flexible learning and training opportunities;
- learning from work;
- guidance and tutoring;
- marketing and industrial consultancy;
- organisational development.

To support this work, a central FEU team is now in place. All Regional Curriculum Bases provide at least one part-time designated officer (there is a list of current contacts at the end of this Appendix) to assist the region with the planning and management of staff development programmes related to the delivery of competence-based learning and assessment, and to provide materials to support those programmes. They also act as information sources and provide a distribution network for training and guidance materials published by the NCVQ, FEU, Training Agency and other bodies, to support staff development. In most cases they are able to provide self-financing training

programmes on request. Distance learning materials will soon be available through the Open University.

STAGE 2: DEVELOPING GENERAL AND SPECIFIC COMPETENCE

(April 1989 to March 1990)

This stage will be concerned with the need to train targeted groups of staff in the general and specific competence related to their particular occupational area. Central FEU support will continue, and it is hoped that regional resources will eventually increase to at least one full-time equivalent designated officer in each region.

STAGE 3: DEVELOPING AND MAINTAINING COMPETENCE

(April 1990 to August 1990)

Experience with similar programmes suggests that it may take up to three or four years to integrate new approaches into organisational practice. By April 1990, however, there is likely to be considerably more expertise available at all levels to provide continuing support for staff.

There is also encouraging evidence that some LEAs will wish to enhance the staged programme with their own resources. Individual LEAs have, for example, seconded full-time or part-time officers to be responsible for local management of NVQ-related staff development programmes and to work closely with regional officers. Where such enhanced arrangements are in place, the work of the central and regional agencies will be greatly strengthened.

THE NCVQ/FEU REGIONAL STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT NETWORK

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APPENDIX C: SOURCES OF FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information can be obtained from:

- The Training Agency of the Department of Employment
- Department of Education and Science
- Department of Education in Northern Ireland and Department of Economic Development
- National Council for Vocational Qualifications
- Local education authorities and institutions of further and higher education
- Further Education Unit
- Further Education Staff College
- Regional Advisory Councils and Regional Curriculum Bases
- Companies organising training for their employees
- The Open College and other private training organisations
- Accredited Training Centres
- Examining and validating bodies